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THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

THE PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH
Superintendent

THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

In early times palimpsests were parchments or other materials from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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THE PALIMPSEST

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Samuel Ryan Curtis

The career of Samuel Ryan Curtis illustrates both the versatility of the American pioneers and their westward movement. His parents — Zarah and Phalley Yale Curtis — were originally residents of Connecticut, but early in the nineteenth century they moved westward to Ohio, stopping in New York on the way. Both the date and the place of the birth of their son, Samuel Ryan Curtis, seems to be uncertain, but it appears probable that he was born near Champlain, New York, on February 3, 1805.

His early boyhood was spent on a farm in Licking County, Ohio, with his brothers and sisters. Samuel then secured a cadetship at West Point, graduating on July 1, 1831, with the rank of brevet second lieutenant. He was assigned to the Seventh Infantry and sent to Fort Gibson.

In the fall of 1831, Lieutenant Curtis married Miss Belinda Buckingham of Mansfield, Ohio. Pos-

sibly because of the difficulty of adjusting the requirements of home life and a military career, Lieutenant Curtis resigned his commission in June, 1832, after serving only one year in the army, and returned to Ohio. For a time he considered taking up law, but decided to accept employment as an engineer in charge of construction work on the National Road. In April, 1837, he became chief engineer of the Muskingum River improvement project — a futile attempt to make a shallow river navigable.

It was about this time that he became interested in a railroad to the Pacific Ocean, and in 1839 circulated a petition for a grant of public lands for this purpose — but nothing came of it. Curtis next turned his attention to the study of law and was admitted to the bar of Ohio in 1841.

When the Mexican War began, Curtis, who was a colonel of militia, was appointed Adjutant General of Ohio. A swivel chair position, however, never seems to have satisfied him and he very soon resigned to become colonel of the Third Ohio Volunteer Infantry. Neither the regiment nor its commander saw much active service, although Colonel Curtis served for a time as governor of Matamoras and later of Camargo, Monterey, and Saltillo. He was honorably discharged from service on June 24, 1847.

It was soon after this that Samuel Ryan Curtis came to Iowa. He was employed as chief engineer of the improvement project along the Des Moines

River, and moved his family — a wife, two sons, and two daughters to Keokuk. The Des Moines River project met endless difficulties: a great flood inundated the valley in 1849 and washed out some of the work already done; disagreements over the land grants made the continuation of the work uncertain; and late in 1849 the board in charge decided to employ an engineer at a smaller salary. Curtis went to St. Louis as city engineer.

Between 1850 and 1853 — when a political change threw him out of office — he laid out an adequate sewer system, began the drainage of a lake which had become unsanitary, and constructed a wider levee and more wharves. Most important of all was his work in connection with the Mississippi River. For years the river had been eating away at the Illinois bank and threatened to change its bed and abandon the city altogether. By building a dam across from an island to the Illinois shore and a dike southward from the island, Curtis succeeded in deflecting the current back along the St. Louis levee.

In the fall of 1853, he surveyed a line across Iowa for a railroad to be called the Philadelphia, Fort Wayne and Platte Valley Railroad — also known as the "Air Line" road. This railroad never materialized, but Curtis became convinced that there should be several railroads across Iowa uniting at Council Bluffs "in a great trunk line, running west up the broad valley of the Platte".

During these years Curtis also maintained a law

office at Keokuk, and was elected mayor of the city in 1856. In his inaugural address he recommended the construction of a canal on the Iowa side around the rapids in the Mississippi River. Indeed, he had suggested this in 1849 in a report made to a private company. It was not, however, until 1877 that such a canal was completed by the United States government — only to be submerged in 1913 when the waters of the Mississippi backed up from the great Keokuk dam.

Perhaps his election as mayor stirred higher political ambitions. At any rate, in the fall of 1856, Samuel R. Curtis was nominated as a candidate for Congress by the newly organized Republican party, and, to the surprise of the politicians, he was elected. In 1858 he was reëlected, and again in 1860. His chief interest in Congress was the promotion of a railroad west to the Pacific, although he was also interested in military affairs. In April, 1860, Curtis, as chairman of the Select Committee on the Pacific Railroad, submitted a report to Congress in which the advantages of such a railroad were presented and the central route was recommended.

But the Civil War was looming on the horizon. In December, 1860, Curtis represented Iowa on a committee of thirty-three, appointed to consider the threat of disunion. He also represented Iowa at the "Peace Convention" held at Washington, in February, 1861. Neither of these groups found any solution of the problem, however.

Upon the close of the session of Congress on March 4, 1861, Curtis returned to Keokuk. There the news of the firing on Fort Sumter reached him and he returned at once to Washington. In the course of some of his conferences with officials there, he called upon the Assistant Commissary General and incidentally suggested that provision would soon have to be made for enlisting at least fifty thousand men. Whereupon that officer is said to have exclaimed, "Great God, Curtis! What are you going to do with such an army here?"

Curtis, however, did not limit himself to advice. He returned to Iowa and on June 1, 1861, was elected colonel of the Second Iowa Infantry. On the thirteenth of June this regiment embarked for Hannibal, Missouri, where troops were urgently needed to hold the railroad between that city and St. Joseph. Leaving his men in charge of the situation in Missouri, Colonel Curtis hurried to Washington to attend the special session of Congress called for July 4, 1861. On Sunday, July 21st, came the battle and rout at Bull Run. Colonel Curtis was one of the leaders who tried to halt the panic-stricken volunteers, but without success.

Convinced that his work lay on the battle field rather than in the legislative halls, Curtis resigned his seat in Congress and accepted an appointment as brigadier general. Almost immediately he was plunged into the maelstrom of Missouri politics — at Jefferson Barracks, Camp Benton, and later in

St. Louis. The storm center in Missouri at that time was General John C. Frémont. On October 24, 1861, President Lincoln sent to General Curtis a letter and an order. The order directed General Frémont to turn over the command of the Western Department to Major General D. Hunter. The letter authorized General Curtis to refrain from delivering the order under certain conditions. Curtis, however, felt that the order should be delivered, and Frémont was removed from command.

In accordance with an order issued on November 6, 1861, General Curtis was directed to take charge of affairs in and around St. Louis. The position was as comfortable as handling a porcupine. Men and women of all degrees and shades of loyalty and disloyalty had to be considered.

On Christmas Day, 1861, General Curtis was assigned to command the Southwestern District of Missouri. He established headquarters in Rolla and early in February began an intensive campaign to clear the State of Confederates. The rations prepared for the campaign consisted of "hard bread, flour, hominy, rice, desiccated potatoes, mixed vegetables, sugar, coffee and salt" with fresh meat to be provided on the way.

Having pursued the Confederates under General Sterling Price into Arkansas, he issued a proclamation ordering his men to protect women and children, promising "relentless war" on the foes of the Union, but expressing a hope for peace. On March

6, 7, and 8, 1862, the army of General Curtis met a combined Confederate army at Pea Ridge, Arkansas, and won a decisive victory. As a reward, Curtis was made a major general — the first Iowa man to receive this rank.

It was soon after this battle that General Curtis and his chief quartermaster, Philip H. Sheridan, had a serious disagreement over the purchase of horses and mules offered for sale by certain Union soldiers and camp followers. Sheridan declared that the animals were stolen and refused to pay for them. The men appealed to General Curtis and in the altercation which followed, Sheridan wrote to General Curtis that he would not participate in "jayhawking". He was ordered under arrest, but, at his own request, was soon sent north to buy horses.

Some four weeks after the battle of Pea Ridge, General Curtis started south through the Ozark Mountains, hoping to capture Little Rock. In this he was unsuccessful and as military governor he was soon struggling with the problems of disloyalty and guerrilla warfare. Transportation was difficult and supplies ran short. "For God's sake", wrote his quartermaster, "consider the practicability of getting trains over the road you are going to take!"

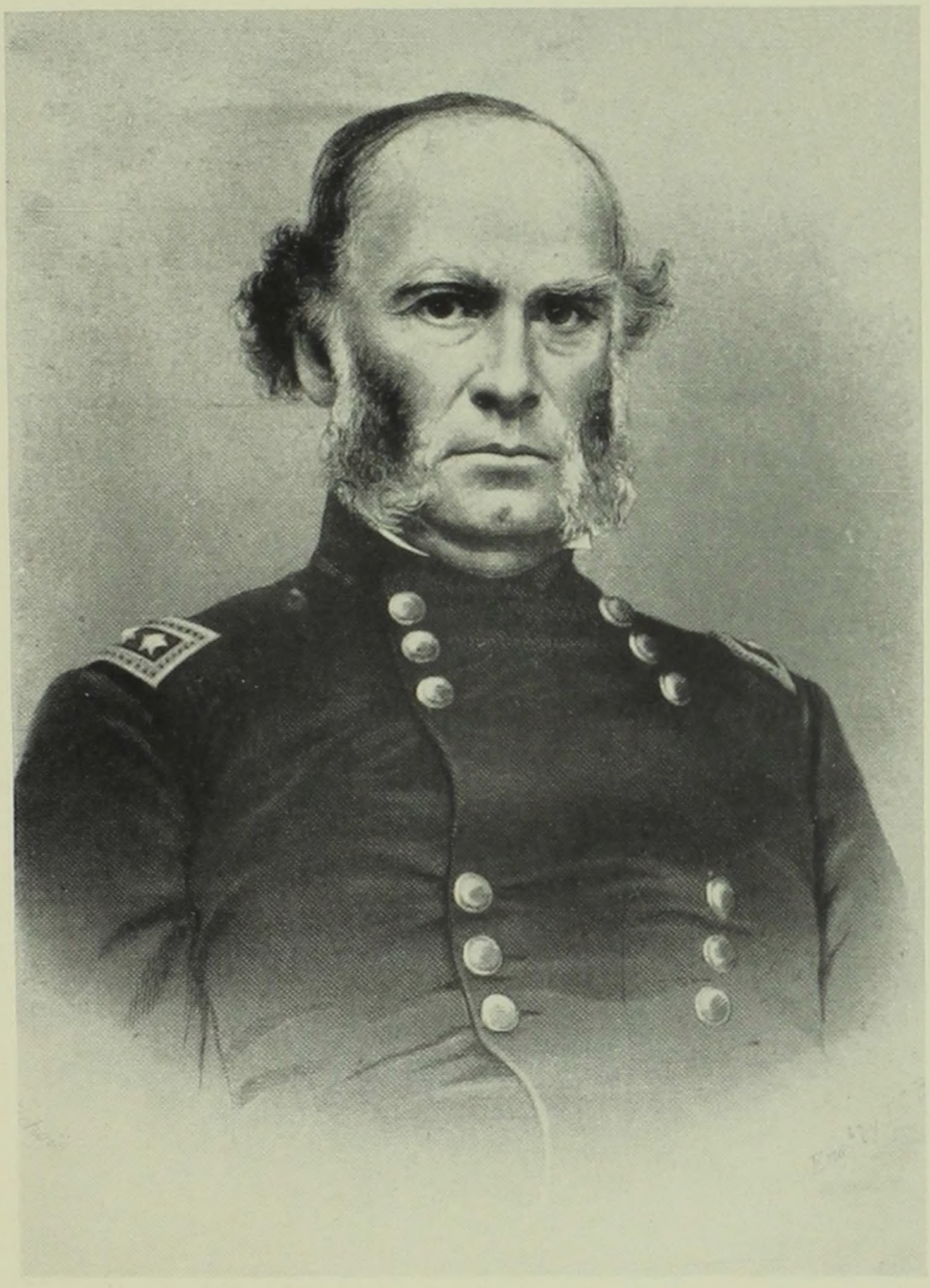
In July General Curtis decided to move the Army of the Southwest to the White River in order to meet supplies which were to be sent there under convoy of gun boats. The march through the canebrakes, swamps, and forests in the southern summer

heat was exhausting, and when the men reached the river, they found that the gunboats had already come and gone. General Curtis then moved his army to Helena on the Mississippi River.

His troubles were by no means over. Helena was a rendezvous for escaped slaves who had to be fed by some one. It was also the center of the cotton industry. General Curtis put one of the presses to work, had the slaves haul the cotton which he purchased from the owners, and used the profits to feed the fugitives. It was, no doubt, a good plan; but it caused trouble later for General Curtis.

In September, 1862, General Curtis was assigned to command the Department of the Missouri, including Missouri, Arkansas, and Kansas. Guerrillas infested the country; politicians harassed the military authorities; there were charges and counter-charges of fraud and disloyalty. Political enemies and disgruntled speculators charged General Curtis with irregularities in handling the cotton at Helena, Arkansas. In a letter to President Lincoln, Curtis explained the situation and added: "I have lived too long and filled too many private and public places without reproach to be afraid of lies invented by rebel sympathizers and exasperated knaves generally."

Nothing definite seems to have come of these charges, but through the influence of Governor H. R. Gamble of Missouri, who was dissatisfied with what he termed the severity of the Iowa general in the



MAJOR GENERAL SAMUEL R. CURTIS

treatment of disloyalty, General Curtis was removed from the command of the Department on May 22, 1863.

President Lincoln explained that he consented to this removal only because he hoped that it would put an end to the bitter factional quarrel in Missouri, and not because of any criticism of General Curtis. S. H. M. Byers says that the removal was due to Lincoln's desire to placate the Gamble faction in Missouri in the hope of securing the vote of Missouri in the Republican national convention of 1864, but if this was the motive, it failed; the Missouri delegation gave its first vote to General Grant.

At this time, too, General Curtis suffered a personal bereavement when one of his sons, Major Henry Z. Curtis, was killed on October 6, 1863, near Baxter Springs, Kansas, by a band of guerrillas under W. C. Quantrill.

General Curtis was next sent to the Department of Kansas. His chief responsibility there was the protection of settlers from the Indians, but late in the summer of 1864, an army of Confederates under General Sterling Price swept across Missouri into Kansas hoping to capture Fort Leavenworth and the supplies there. Price was said to have fifteen thousand men while Curtis had only about three thousand regular soldiers. The Kansas militia was called out, however, and with its aid General Price's army was defeated and driven back across Kansas into Arkansas, losing, it was estimated, over ten

thousand men and much equipment. One of the battles in this campaign, fought at Westport, now a part of Kansas City, Missouri, was called the "Gettysburg of the West."

Pursuit of the retreating Confederates into Arkansas was hampered by lack of supplies and uncertainty of authority, for General Curtis was then outside his own Department. Moreover, the Kansas militia objected to leaving their State. In fact General Curtis was accused of ordering out the militia for the purpose of preventing the men from voting in the November election. Nevertheless he persisted in his plans and on November 8, 1864, his army fired a final volley at the Confederate raiders as they crossed the Arkansas River, and then returned to Fort Leavenworth.

The usual political inquest followed, and on January 30, 1865, General Curtis was transferred to the Department of the Northwest. He assumed command at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on February 13, 1865.

"Of the Iowa major-generals," wrote a contemporary at this time, "General Curtis is the largest in person. He has a tall, fine form, and, though nearly sixty years of age, is erect and vigorous. His large, hazel eyes give his countenance an expression of gravity and thoughtfulness which comports well with the dignity of his movements and manners. But, if he is sedate, and if he never laughs boisterously, he is nevertheless easily approached and so-

ciable; he is kind and generous-hearted, and would not knowingly injure the feelings of the most humble or unfortunate.

"He has one trait which is not in keeping with his general character. He is nice and precise in dress, and in this respect has been noted for the scrupulousness with which he has complied with the Army Regulations. He never, when on duty, omits a regulation trapping. In many respects he is not unlike General Grant; but not in this."

When the Department of the Northwest was dissolved in July, 1865, General Curtis was sent to treat with the Indian tribes on the Upper Missouri, and spent much of the fall of 1865 and the spring of 1866 on this mission. His formal discharge from the army was dated April 30, 1866.

Upon returning to civil life, Samuel R. Curtis turned his attention to the Pacific railroad. Indeed, he had never forgotten his vision of a trans-continental railroad and the act of July 1, 1862, providing for the construction of the Union Pacific Railroad named General Curtis as one of the incorporators. He had secured a leave of absence from his military duties from August 29th to September 24, 1862, to attend the organization meeting held at Chicago, where he was chosen to preside.

Inspection work along the line of the Union Pacific Railroad west of Omaha occupied much of his attention during 1866. On December 26, 1866, he finished the inspection of an additional thirty-five miles

of track, signed his report at Omaha, and walked across the Missouri River on the ice in the face of a biting cold wind. On the Iowa side, he stepped into a carriage, and died almost immediately. His body was buried at Keokuk. An equestrian statue now stands in the square of his home city as a tribute to Samuel Ryan Curtis — engineer, soldier, lawyer, citizen.

RUTH A. GALLAHER

Francis Jay Herron

"Remember Wilson's Creek! Remember the deeds of the First Iowa!" wrote Governor Kirkwood to almost every Iowa regiment in the Union forces. And they all remembered, nor did they forget Francis J. Herron, one of the gallant captains at Wilson's Creek, the youngest officer of the State to attain the rank of major general and the second Iowan to win the double star. When the first war tocsin sounded, Herron left his desk in his bank at Dubuque, donned his uniform as the captain of the "Governor's Greys", and in compliance with the unanimous vote of the company tendered their services to the President for the purpose of quelling the insurrection in the South.

From an ancient and honorable lineage, Francis Jay Herron acquired his self-reliant spirit and personal composure which destined him to be a conspicuous leader in battles where courage and resourcefulness were common. His ancestors on the paternal side were among the earliest settlers in eastern Pennsylvania and, on the maternal side, among the oldest families in Pittsburgh. It was there that Francis was born in the year 1837.

At sixteen years of age, Francis Herron left the University of Pittsburgh without obtaining his degree because he believed he knew enough to make

his way in the world — and because he thought so, all remonstrances were unavailing. Fortified with a little clerical experience, he secured employment in a Pittsburgh bank, and a year later became a partner in the banking firm of "Herron and Brothers". In 1856 four Herron brothers, including Francis J., opened a bank in Dubuque.

The people of Iowa, during the pioneer years, had been too busy breaking sod and building log cabins to give much thought to military organization. Furthermore, since the close of the war with Mexico, no necessity had existed for a large army. With the opening of the Civil War in 1861, Iowa could offer only a few independent companies, whose training had been as much social as military. Perhaps the most famous company in the State was the Governor's Greys, which had been organized in February, 1858, and named in honor of Governor Stephen Hempstead. "The Governor's Greys were out on parade yesterday in their new white accoutrements", reported the Dubuque *Herald* on April 10, 1860. "We will defy any city in the West to turn out a better looking military company or a 'whiter' lot of boys than our own G. G's. 'Tis true they are composed of the very pink of our finest young men; still there is not a tinge of the cod-fish in the composition of one of them."

Early in January, 1861, the Governor's Grey's under the leadership of Captain Herron, volunteered for active service in anticipation of hostilities.

When the call came in April for one regiment from Iowa, they were ready for duty. On April 23rd, the Governor's Greys left for the rendezvous at Keokuk to be mustered in as Company I of the First Iowa Volunteer Infantry.

For two weeks the First Iowa remained in camp at Keokuk, drilling five hours a day, attending picnics, living in tents, and learning to cook for themselves. Then, on the thirteenth of June, 1861, the men embarked on a steamer to join the Union forces at Booneville, Missouri. On July 3rd, General Nathaniel Lyon, with an army of a little more than three thousand infantry and one battery of artillery, determined to pursue the Confederates who were retreating toward the southwest. At Grand River, Lyon's army was reënforced by two Kansas regiments, a detachment of regulars, and a battery of artillery. The weather was intensely hot and the pace unusually rapid even for seasoned soldiers. As the recruits marched for hours along dusty roads under a torrid sun, some were overcome by the heat and compelled to fall out of the ranks. But the First Iowa stood the test of endurance so well that they out-distanced part of the column. General Lyon called them his Iowa greyhounds.

At Springfield, General Lyon sent urgent requests for more troops. But they were not furnished, and, unwilling to remain idle while the Confederates were concentrating about him, he determined to attack rather than retreat. So it was that on August 10,

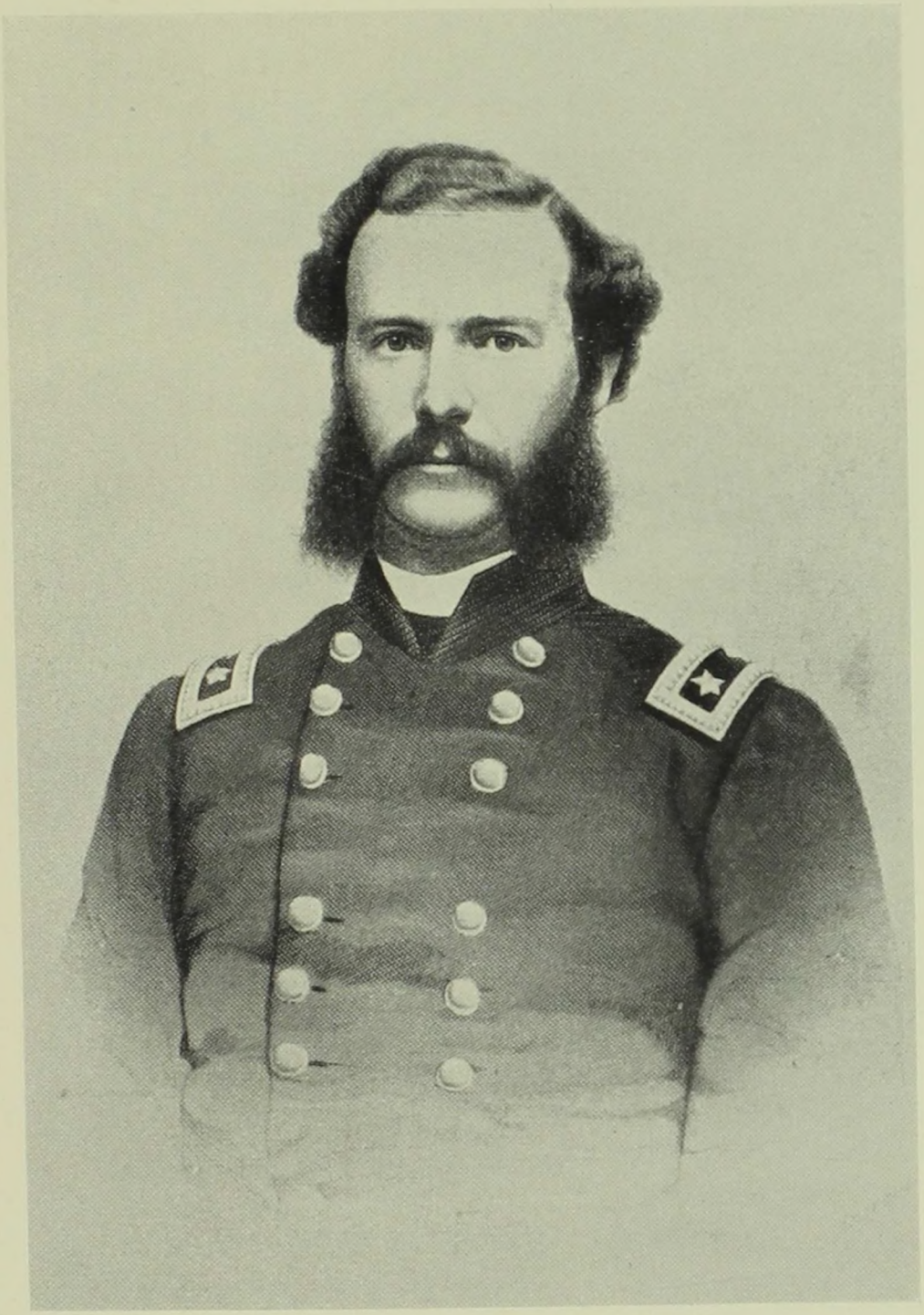
1861, in the battle of Wilson's Creek, the Iowa soldiers received their first baptism of fire, and it was there that Captain Herron first won recognition. In a battle where loyalty and patriotism were arrayed against numbers, General Lyon's devoted little army of less than six thousand faced a larger force in a strategic position and won a decisive victory.

"Will your First Iowa men stay and fight with me?" Lyon asked Lieutenant Colonel William H. Merritt.

"Every man of them," replied Merritt. And they did.

Quietly and with muffled drums, the Union troops marched through the darkness toward Wilson's Creek hoping to surprise the enemy. But the Confederate videttes had discovered the advance and ran in without firing a shot. The main force of the enemy occupied the broad valley of the stream, with reserves on a ridge beyond. From this ridge and valley, hosts of gray-clad troops charged and recharged the Union lines, hoping by sheer force of numbers to overwhelm and drive back the flanks and center.

Throughout the battle, from early morning until afternoon, the Iowa regiment was in the thick of the fight. Time after time they repulsed the desperate attacks of the Southerners; again and again they foiled attempts to turn their flanks. Officers led their men into action and inexperienced volunteers faced the terrific hail of shot and shell like veterans.



MAJOR GENERAL FRANCIS J. HERRON

Death was everywhere. After being wounded twice, General Lyon fell with a musket ball through his breast. "Iowa Regiment, you are noble boys!" he murmured as he saw his "greyhounds" prepare to charge. A moment later he died. So the struggle raged — charge and counter-charge, sortie and repulse. Regiments were thrown into confusion and retired in disorder. But at the end it was the First Iowa that held the enemy in check while the shattered Union forces retired from the field.

No unit of the First Iowa conducted itself with greater valor than Company I. At one time it was sent into ambush with two other companies to intercept a flanking movement of a large detachment of the enemy. Lying close to the brow of a hill overlooking a ravine through which the Confederates were advancing, the men waited until the head of the column was almost upon them.

"Now, boys, keep cool, aim low, and give 'em hell!" came the order.

And the Iowans responded like veterans. In the words of Major S. D. Sturgis, who assumed command after the death of General Lyon, they "fought like devils, and if any man after this ever says to me that volunteers won't fight, I'll make it a personal matter with him!"

Captain Herron was knocked down by the explosion of a shell, but he was not seriously hurt. For the "zeal and courage" he displayed, Major Sturgis gave him special mention in the official report of the

battle. Like the other volunteers in the First Iowa he was mustered out at St. Louis on August 21st. But when the Ninth regiment of Iowa infantry was organized in September, he was commissioned lieutenant colonel and returned to the theater of military operations in Missouri.

On October 11th, with scarcely more than a month of training, the regiment was ordered to proceed from Benton Barracks to Franklin, Missouri, and thence to Lebanon, where it joined the Army of the Southwest, commanded by General Curtis. Colonel William Vandever of the Ninth Iowa was placed in command of the second brigade, leaving Lieutenant Colonel Herron in command of the regiment. And so, in March, 1862, as lieutenant colonel, Herron again marched into battle at Pea Ridge where his conduct and courage won universal admiration, adding to the laurels he had previously gained at Wilson's Creek.

Upon approach of the Union forces, the Confederates evacuated Springfield, where they had spent the winter, and retired toward the Ozark Mountains. Then began that remarkable march of General Curtis's army in pursuit of the enemy. At Huntsville, forty miles from camp, a detachment of the Ninth Iowa discovered that General Earl Van Dorn was concentrating his forces to strike back viciously at the bluecoats who were pressing him too closely. Realizing the danger of being cut off and captured by a superior force, Colonel Herron hastened to re-

join the command and, after a continuous march of sixteen hours, reached the regiment at eight o'clock in the evening of March 6th.

At ten o'clock the next morning, the battle of Pea Ridge opened with such a fierce attack that every regiment of the Union army had to be used to repulse the enemy. General Curtis advanced in the hope of winning a decisive victory, but he in turn was compelled to retire under a terrific fire of musketry and canister. There were occasional intervals, during which both sides replenished their ammunition and removed the wounded to the rear.

For two days the battle raged. Through it all the Ninth Iowa fought as though inspired. Their casualties numbered nearly one-third of the regiment — heavier than any other unit engaged. Unfortunately, during the afternoon of the first day, Herron's horse was shot from under him and he, disabled by the fall, was taken prisoner. "Of Lieutenant Colonel Herron," wrote Colonel Vandever, "too much cannot be said. He was foremost in leading his men, and with coolness and bravery never excelled rallied them to repeated acts of daring and bravery."

Exchanged for a Confederate officer within a fortnight, Herron resumed active service almost immediately. On July 30, 1862, he was promoted directly to the rank of brigadier general, without being a colonel. Three weeks later he was ordered to St. Louis and placed in command of several regiments

operating in Missouri. And when the Army of the Frontier was organized in October, 1862, General Herron was put in command of the Third Division.

During most of November, the Army of the Frontier had been watching the enemy south of the old Pea Ridge battlefield in western Arkansas. On the twenty-eighth of November, General James A. Blunt, commanding the First Division, captured Cane Hill, but the Confederates, twenty-five thousand strong, started a flanking movement to cut him off from the rest of the army under Herron a hundred miles away. Blunt telegraphed for help and Herron, without a moment's delay, broke camp with the Second and Third Divisions and began a forced march to the rescue. From daylight to dark for three days, the weary soldiers hastened along the road, averaging thirty-five miles a day. Daylight, Sunday morning, December 7th, found the column at breakfast within a few miles of Cane Hill, but before the meal was finished, a portion of the advance cavalry came hurrying back to camp, panic-stricken and dismayed. Hindman's army was upon them! From the excited soldiers, General Herron learned that Major J. M. Hubbard, in command of the advance guard, had been captured. If Blunt were to be saved, Herron would have to attack swiftly and with great show of force. If he had known the diplomatic resourcefulness of Major Hubbard, he might have begun the battle with much more assurance.

"How much of a force has General Herron," Hubbard was asked by the Confederate leader.

"Enough to annihilate you," replied the major.

With less than five thousand men, General Herron accepted the challenge of battle with the odds all against him. Thanks to Hubbard's report, however, and the spirit with which the men fought, the Confederates, with a vastly larger force, well armed, and in a position of their own selection, dared not risk assault. Advancing southward, Herron met the cautious enemy at Prairie Grove. By skillful maneuvering he succeeded in throwing his whole force into the battle so suddenly and effectively that the Confederates gave way. Onward charged the Union ranks until, from concealed positions, the second lines of the enemy rose and poured a terrible fire point-blank into Herron's gallant troops. They recoiled but rallied and reformed their lines. For more than three hours the battle surged back and forth. In vain the Union officers listened for the sound of Blunt's cannon. The odds were too great. They could not hold their ground much longer. And then, about two o'clock, when the Southerners' left wing started a powerful flank movement, they encountered fresh troops and well posted batteries. Blunt had arrived, and the battle of Prairie Grove was won — in some respects the most brilliant victory for Union arms in the whole war.

During the winter, Herron remained with the Army of the Frontier, operating in Missouri and

Arkansas without participating in any major engagements. Late in May, 1863, he was summoned to Vicksburg to take part in the reduction of that city. Occupying the left of Grant's line, he rendered most effective service. From there, Herron was transferred to the Department of the Gulf, where he engaged in the siege of Mobile.

After four years of faithful and resultful service, Major General Herron was mustered out at New Orleans in 1865, and in that city he entered the practice of law. This business, however, turned out disastrously, and from 1867 to 1869 he was United States Marshal for the District of Louisiana. In 1872 and 1873, he served as Secretary of State in Louisiana, after which he went to New York, where he engaged in the practice of law. There he resided until his death on January 8, 1902.

Until the end, Herron retained his self-reliant spirit, his calm and composed attitude, and his chief characteristic — taciturnity. For General Herron was a man of few words; yet, if he talked but little, there was nothing sullen or morose about him. Intelligent and agreeable, Herron enjoyed the full confidence of men who appreciated those qualities of leadership. Throughout his career, Major General Herron won extraordinarily rapid promotion on his own merits.

GRETCHEN CARLSON

Frederick Steele

Frederick Steele was a soldier of two wars — the war with Mexico and the Civil War. Born in Delhi, New York, on January 14, 1819, he entered West Point Military Academy in 1839 at the age of twenty and was graduated in 1843, thirtieth in a class of thirty-nine. Among his associates at the Academy were Ulysses S. Grant, William T. Sherman, George H. Thomas, Nathaniel Lyon, George B. McClellan, Don Carlos Buell, John Pope, and William S. Rosecrans on the Union side, while "Stonewall" Jackson, George E. Pickett, and James Longstreet later won Confederate fame.

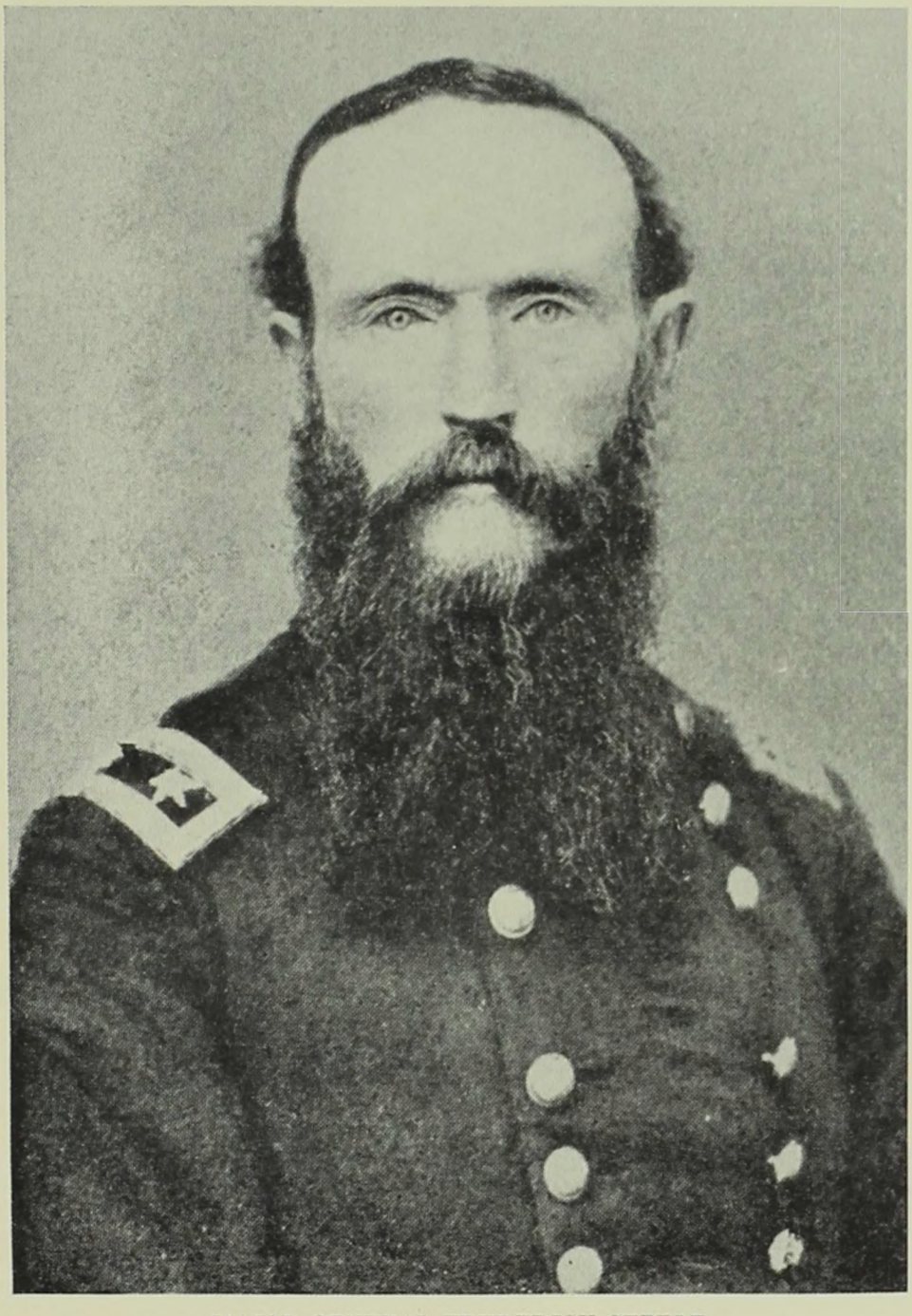
During the Mexican War, Lieutenant Steele served with General Winfield Scott, commanding a company of regular infantry. For personal gallantry in the battle of Contreras he was breveted first lieutenant on August 20, 1847, and less than a month later won a brevet as captain for his splendid conduct in the battle of Chapultepec, where he volunteered as one of the assaulting party. Later he fought at Ocalaca, Churubusco and Molina del Rey.

When the American army entered Mexico City on September 14, 1847, he marched at the head of his company. "As a triumphal procession the command looked rather strange." Battle-stained troops, decorated with mud and carrying their arms at quite hap-

hazard angles, trudged into the ancient city. Forming in line of battle before the palace, the officers took their places at the front, Captain B. S. Roberts of Iowa hoisted a battle-scarred American flag on the palace staff at seven o'clock, arms were presented, and the officers saluted. "Amid the involuntary applause of the Mexicans, Gen. Scott, dressed in full uniform and mounted on a tall, heavy bay charger, dashed with his staff and Harneys dragoons into the grand plaza — his noble figure, gold epaulets and snowy plumes, resplendent under the brilliant sun, fully typifying the invisible glory of his unkempt and limping army."

After the Mexican War, Steele resumed the rank of first lieutenant in the regular army and served with the Second Infantry at various posts in California until 1853. For six years he acted as adjutant of the regiment. In 1855 he was promoted to a captaincy and saw active service on the frontier in Minnesota, Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas.

Within a month after the Civil War broke out, Steele was made a major and assigned to the Eleventh Infantry in Missouri, although he never actually served with that regiment. In the battle of Wilson's Creek on August 10, 1861, his battalion, composed of two companies of the Second Infantry, fought side by side with the First Iowa. While he had only one commissioned officer under him his troops were handled so effectively that he won high praise. During the early part of the action, he had



MAJOR GENERAL FREDERICK STEELE

no opportunity of engaging the enemy except to assist in dispersing a body of cavalry that threatened the rear. After General Lyon fell mortally wounded, Steele was ordered to form in line of battle and advance to the front. Heavy firing by both sides followed without any decisive advantage to either. In the last desperate charge of the Confederates against Totten's battery and the main Union position, Steele's battalion did good work, the men firing away nearly all their cartridges. Just before the retreat began, Steele helped repulse another attack and enabled several other units to retire in good order. On the retreat to Springfield, after reaching the prairie, he commanded the rear guard.

In connection with his desire of selecting regular army officers as colonels of Iowa regiments, Governor Kirkwood scrutinized the conduct of the most conspicuous leaders in the battle of Wilson's Creek. He was particularly impressed with the work of Major Steele, and therefore commissioned him colonel of the Eighth Iowa Infantry on September 23, 1861. Steele assumed command when the regiment reached Benton Barracks about the first of October. After a fortnight of intensive training, the Eighth Iowa was sent by rail to Syracuse and thence marched to Springfield, Missouri, with Lieutenant Colonel James L. Geddes in command. Colonel Steele was detailed to Quincy and, in November, to Sedalia, Missouri, commanding a brigade. While his connection with the Eighth Iowa was very brief,

it was long enough to inculcate the essentials of military discipline.

On January 29, 1862, Steele was made a brigadier general and returned to St. Louis. A month later he was dispatched to Pilot Knob and placed in charge of all the troops in the Southeastern District of Missouri west of the St. Francis River with instructions to conduct an expedition southward into Arkansas, destroying Confederate supplies at various points and clearing the region of enemy troops. The ultimate objective was Helena, Arkansas. In May he joined forces with General Curtis and was given command of the First Division in the Army of the Southwest operating in eastern Arkansas. The campaign lasted practically all summer, but after Helena was captured in July the work was principally a matter of establishing a new base.

During the fall of 1862, Steele was in command of the District of Eastern Arkansas with headquarters at Helena, but in December he took active command of the Fourth Division of the Thirteenth Army Corps of General Sherman's Yazoo expedition. On Christmas evening the troops were gladdened by the announcement that early the next day the army would move on Vicksburg by way of Chickasaw Bayou. But on that very day Confederate raiders destroyed Grant's base at Holly Springs and ruined the whole campaign.

Utterly ignorant of these unfortunate events, however, Sherman and his army sailed down the

Mississippi and up the Yazoo River early on the morning of the twenty-sixth, officers and men enthusiastically confident of dining the next day in Vicksburg. The calamity which followed seemed all the more disastrous on account of the exuberant spirits under which the attack commenced.

Sherman's troops, consisting almost entirely of western regiments, disembarked on the south side of the Yazoo River and bivouacked for the night in the swamp beside Chickasaw Bayou. The level plateau across the Bayou was lined with Confederate rifle pits, while the bluffs beyond were crowded with batteries of artillery commanding every approach across the plateau. All night trains rumbled into Vicksburg bearing Confederate reinforcements.

On the morning of December 27th, the Union army began to advance in four columns, Steele's division forming the extreme left. All that day and the next were spent in reconnaissance and light skirmishing. At noon on the twenty-ninth the signal for the assault was given and two columns crossed the Bayou a mile apart under a terrific fire. Thayer's brigade of Steele's division, composed of five Iowa regiments and a battery of light artillery, crossed the Bayou and charged the rifle pits. The first line was carried, and the second, with the gallant Fourth Iowa in the lead. But the concentrated musketry of the enemy was too hot for human endurance. Unable to press on up the bluffs against the terrible fire, the Iowans remained for a time

waiting for support, scores of them falling, and then, obeying the command to retire, retreated steadily. About eight hundred of the three thousand men who made the attack were killed or wounded.

Immediately after this unsuccessful campaign, Steele proceeded on the expedition against Arkansas Post, a strong fort on the left bank of the Arkansas River, forty miles above its mouth. On the evening of January 9th, the Union army landed from transports and proceeded to surround the place. Steele was ordered to push forward one of his brigades along the Bayou on the right and cut off escape in that direction. Heavy cannonading began at one o'clock and the grand assault started a half hour later, led again by Thayer's Iowa brigade. After three and a half hours of hard fighting a white flag appeared above the fort and Steele's men swarmed over the ramparts. The fort, seventeen pieces of artillery, and ammunition and subsistence stores were the rewards for their valor.

About April first, Steele's division moved up the Mississippi River to Greenville, Mississippi, and thence marched thirty-five or forty miles eastward threatening to approach Vicksburg from the rear. The expedition diverted the attention of the enemy from Grant's main movements, resulted in the collection of large quantities of supplies throughout the wealthy and fertile region traversed, and culminated in the capture of Jackson, Mississippi. Thence Steele's Iowans returned to participate in the siege

of Vicksburg. As soon as that Confederate stronghold fell, Sherman's army was released to pursue General Johnston, and again Steele's division marched to the capture of the State capital of Mississippi. After the evacuation of Jackson, General Steele returned to Vicksburg and was immediately appointed to the command of the Army of Arkansas.

This was his first independent command. Being a man of action, he conducted a campaign around Helena and Little Rock which, for brilliance in conception and success in execution, surprised the North no less than the South. In the short space of three months, Steele recovered nearly the entire State of Arkansas. In January, 1864, he was placed in command of the Department of Arkansas, a position that he held until the end of November, participating meanwhile in several important engagements. During the closing months of the war he captured Pensacola and Mobile. After peace was declared he remained in the army, serving in Texas and the far West until relieved in 1867. Frederick Steele died in San Mateo, California, on January 12, 1868, old in service but not yet fifty years of age.

Though never a resident of Iowa, Steele is entitled to a permanent place in the annals of the State. His service as colonel of the Eighth Iowa was not long, but his career from the beginning to the end of the war was in command of Iowa troops. At Wilson's Creek he fought with the First Iowa and several Iowa regiments stormed Fort Blakely at his com-

mand in the last hard battle of the war. With Iowa troops he marched from southeastern Missouri to Helena in 1862 and thence to Chickasaw Bayou; again with Iowa troops he captured Arkansas Post; as one of Grant's most trusted generals he helped take Vicksburg with Iowa troops; and his favorite Iowa regiments formed a large part of his army of Arkansas on the Little Rock expedition.

General Steele was a man of striking individuality. Small of stature and spare of build, he was nevertheless wiry and enduring. His gray eyes had a snappy way about them that puzzled a stranger, but scarcely more than the peculiar shrill sharp notes of his voice. His grizzly hair and beard seemed in harmony with his military character.

Very social in his inclinations, he knew a fund of stories which he told in a manner to rival Lincoln himself. But he could be keenly sarcastic as well as humorous on occasion. One day after the Mexican War he was dining alone at a hotel, when several other officers came in and took seats at another table. Among them was W. J. Hardee, who, through carelessness, had been captured with his company at Thornton's Field by a detachment of Mexicans. The incident was well known in the army. After a few minutes Steele joined the others.

"What is your name?" inquired Hardee and, upon Steele's answer, blurted out, "I never heard of you in Mexico."

"I have heard of you, sir," Steele replied.

"Indeed, and where was that?" asked Hardee innocently.

"At Thornton's Field", said Steele, and the silence that followed became oppressive.

Being a confirmed bachelor and having no immediate family ties, he lavished a good deal of affection on his horses and dogs. He was a superb horseman and one of his greatest bereavements in the Mobile campaign was the loss of his splendid black Morgan horse "Sigel" who broke away from the orderly and ran straight into the enemy lines.

Frederick Steele stood high in the esteem and confidence of his West Point classmate, General Grant. Perhaps the friendship of Grant had something to do with his promotion to the rank of major general, though the two men were not associated in the war until the Vicksburg campaign. Not only in the "Memoirs" of General Grant, but in the official reports of other officers, the soldierly qualities and strategic ability of General Steele were highly praised. The hostility of the whole State outside the Union picket lines made the task of restoring loyal civil government in Arkansas extremely difficult, particularly for one so humane as he. Against non-combatants he could not be severe. Lincoln understood the situation and approved of his conciliatory methods.

Adelaide Gill

Grenville Mellen Dodge

Grenville M. Dodge had been sent west to quell the Indian uprisings and reëstablish telegraph and stage communications. After a month had passed, General Grant sent a message asking where he was. The reply came back, "Nobody knows where he is now but everybody knows where he has been." He had left a trail of accomplishment which represented General Dodge — the man who got results. No matter how meager the resources or how formidable the obstacles, he proceeded to use the best available resources to do what needed to be done.

Having graduated from Norwich University and Military Academy in 1850, he spent the next ten years as a civil engineer with railroad companies in Illinois, Iowa, and Nebraska. From 1861 to 1865 he served in the Union army, rising from the rank of colonel to that of major general. He built railroads, made bridges, and erected blockhouses at strategic points; he planned campaigns and fought battles. Since he always accomplished what he set out to do, he was a valuable leader. Grant recognized his dependability and when he needed a man on whom he could rely absolutely he sent for Dodge.

"Gren" Dodge spent his boyhood in Danvers, Massachusetts. During the summers he supported himself by working on a vegetable farm. It was

there that he became acquainted with Frederick Landers, a newly graduated civil engineer. Eager to try his skill at building railroads, Landers decided to construct a siding from the main track of the Eastern Railroad up to his brother's ice house. Grenville helped with the work and found it much more interesting than tending the vegetables. The young engineer recognized the boy's zeal and advised him to go to Norwich University. And so, after a few years, another civil engineer came home to Danvers.

Landers told him that "out west in Chicago" was the place of opportunity and thither he went. His first job was at Peru with the Illinois Central. Soon he was promoted. The outstanding characteristic of his railroad building was the swift yet thorough way in which he did it. Nor did he change his methods down in Tennessee during the war. If some railroad or bridge had been ruined, it was sure to be the one needed immediately by a Union army. In 1863 he built more than a hundred miles of railroad with no tools but axes, picks, and shovels. It was one of the astonishing feats of the war. Dodge always had to build as rapidly as possible. His slogan was "Speed up but build well." After the war, while one of his temporary bridges was being taken out and a truss-bridge erected, one of the workmen remarked, "General Dodge must have thought the war was going to last forever."

Before long Dodge was offered a higher position

with the Illinois Central but he refused it in order to go westward with the Rock Island. In the race between the Lyons and Iowa Central and the Rock Island surveyors across Iowa, Dodge and his men won. When they reached Council Bluffs in 1853, they were greeted with a big celebration, for the people of the West had looked forward to the day when they could travel across Iowa by rail. But Dodge had visions of a far greater achievement — a railroad from the Missouri to the Pacific.

Because he believed that Council Bluffs would be the starting point of the railroad to the Pacific, Dodge established his home there. As a surveyor and a homesteader in the Elkhorn River valley in Nebraska, he became acquainted with conditions on the plains. It took a man with resourcefulness to succeed in that untamed region of the fifties. Though he met many Indians, he never had any serious trouble, which was probably due to his policy of fairness. He always kept on guard against any possible treachery but was also careful to cause no ill feeling by dishonest transactions. It was a useful training school for his later military career.

As he made a study of the possible routes for the transcontinental railroad he became convinced that it should begin at Council Bluffs and follow the Platte River Trail westward just as the Mormons, Indians, and early settlers had done. When Lincoln visited Council Bluffs in 1859, young Dodge was pointed out to him as an authority. The future

President was so interested in the subject that before Dodge knew it he had disclosed secrets that he had been holding for his employers in the East. These arguments made a great impression on Lincoln and when, in the midst of the war, he had to make a decision on the location of the eastern terminal of the Union Pacific Railroad he sent for the young man whom he had met in Council Bluffs.

When the news of the firing on Fort Sumter reached Council Bluffs in April, 1861, Dodge immediately offered the Council Bluffs Guards to Governor Kirkwood. This was a company of men whom he had been training since 1856 for the protection of the frontier towns. Kirkwood decided that they should remain at their post for they might be needed there.

Thereupon Dodge rushed to Washington to procure arms for an Iowa regiment. Having secured the promise of six thousand rifles from Secretary Cameron he hastened back to Iowa to raise the troops. A veteran says of him, "I remember seeing Dodge at Des Moines in the spring of 1861, a short, slender, very active young man, who wore a little, soft, round-topped, brown hat which he had a curious habit of rolling into a ball and nervously thrusting into the outside pocket of a very short brown coat."

On July 6th, he was commissioned colonel of the Fourth Iowa Infantry and forthwith ordered to repel a threatened invasion from Missouri with the

companies then in Camp Kirkwood at Council Bluffs. Meanwhile the other companies were sent directly to Benton Barracks and thence to Rolla, Missouri. It was not until the middle of September that the entire regiment was in camp together. Without any opportunity for preliminary drill, the Fourth Iowa had to get its instruction in the presence of the enemy. Moreover, the equipment which had been promised in Washington never reached Rolla. Old muskets of 1818 and 1829 models were the best available. Thirteen of them burst at the first firing.

But the regiment did get military training. In addition to the ordinary exercises, Dodge gave drills of marching through brush for he anticipated that type of warfare. His regiment had to work harder than any other at the post and they complained of their clothes being torn on the bushes. Four months later at the Battle of Pea Ridge, they were to understand the reason for such strenuous training.

Nevertheless they were loyal to their colonel for he inspired them with his own enthusiasm just as he had won the friendship of his railroad surveyors. In a letter to his mother he said, "I do not think I have an enemy in the regiment. I know I can lead them through a hot place; they will follow me until the last man drops." He did not underestimate the courage of his men.

But the summer of 1861 was not the only time he had to make soldiers out of raw material. As he

returned to Corinth after repairing a railroad in 1862, thousands of negroes followed him, having heard that he favored emancipation. Such a motley crowd of poorly-dressed, hungry, frightened blacks presented a big problem to Dodge, for they had to be fed and protected. Seeing that his men did not like to be kept from active work, he conceived the idea of organizing two companies of negro soldiers, with a few of his men acting as officers, to guard this fugitive camp. That solved the problem.

Again in 1865, soon after he took command of the Department of the Missouri, General Thomas asked for all of his spare troops. Knowing the need, he sent twelve thousand men, which constituted all of his organized forces. The situation in Missouri was precarious, due to the ever-present guerrilla warfare and rival factions. Realizing the danger in which the State was thrown, he set to work with his usual zeal and thoroughness to drill his raw recruits. They held the guerrillas in check and no serious outbreak resulted.

Later in 1865 he used his ingenuity of manufacturing troops in still another way. The St. Louis prisons were crowded with Confederates who were aching to be released. These men had no objection to fighting Indians and so Dodge filled out his regiment with two companies of Rebel Volunteers.

The first time Grenville M. Dodge had a chance to show his military genius was in the battle of Pea Ridge. It was there that the Army of the South-

west met Price's army and fought for three days. On the second day, March 7th, hostilities began at eight thirty in the morning and did not cease until five in the afternoon. The Fourth Iowa had its first baptism of fire, and covered itself with glory. The men knew how to fight and they were persistent. Even the wounded would not leave the field, but remained, loading their guns and shooting from the ground. "Don't give up, Colonel, hang to 'em", they shouted, and Dodge continued the assault until the enemy fled.

But the supply of ammunition was running out. Was it to be another Bunker Hill? As the Confederates charged in full force, Dodge ordered his men to wait until the graycoats were within fifty feet, and then they fired their last round of cartridges. That final volley threw the enemy into confusion. "Charge!" came the order from the indomitable colonel. And the Fourth Iowa obeyed — without ammunition — but with bayonets fixed.

Pea Ridge was a murderous battle. Not only was the mortality unusually high but the hospital equipment was entirely inadequate to care for the wounded. Dodge was continually at the front, accepting more than his share of the danger. After having three horses shot under him he was wounded in the side. As soon as possible he started on the two hundred and fifty mile trip over a rough road to the St. Louis hospital. "It was during this ambulance trip," he wrote, characteristically, "that I received

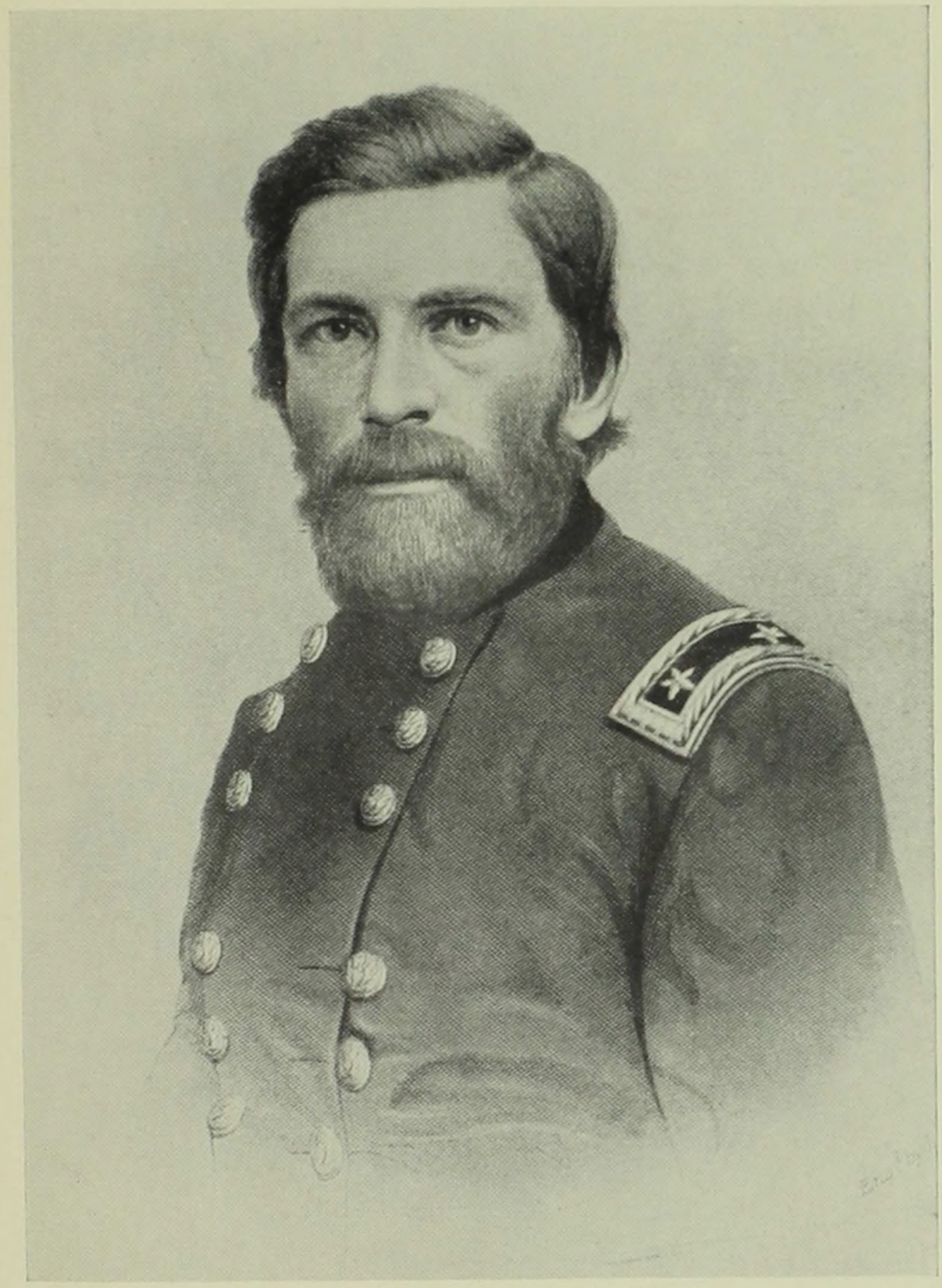
a telegraphic dispatch from General Halleck notifying me of my promotion for services in this battle. It was thought and was also stated in the papers, that I could not live and I told General Halleck afterwards that they expected to have the credit of making a Brigadier General and at the same time to have a vacancy. I fooled them for the promotion insured my getting well."

Dodge remained a brigadier general until June, 1864, although Grant urged his promotion long before that and Sherman and McPherson insisted on giving him commands above his rank. Jealous officers complained of a brigadier general commanding a whole corps. Aware of this criticism, Dodge finally wrote to Sherman asking for a command better suited to his rank. But that forthright general wrote this short, unofficial note in reply: "Suppose you wait until someone that has a right to complain does so; and go ahead and do your duty and not trouble yourself about other's business." Not long after this, President Lincoln solved the problem by sending Dodge a commission as major general. With two stars on his shoulder straps, Dodge commanded the Sixteenth Corps in the battle of Atlanta.

On the evening of July 21st, General Sherman's army had closed up within two miles of Atlanta and occupied high ground commanding the city. Unless General Hood could check the encircling movement of the Union army, his communication toward the south would be seriously threatened. He therefore

determined upon the grand strategy of sending Hardee's corps of about forty thousand men around the left flank to attack McPherson's Army of the Tennessee in the rear, cut off retreat, and capture Sherman's whole army. It was a brilliant plan that came dangerously near success. But as the Confederates came out of the woods a short distance away, the Sixteenth Army Corps faced about and met the first heavy onslaught with such a deadly volley that the assault was checked. Though impelled by the knowledge of the desperate emergency and the motive of preconcerted surprise, it was the attackers that received the real surprise. Dodge's men, numbering less than five thousand, suddenly attacked in the rear by a much larger force from the cover of heavy timber, nevertheless stood and fought in an open field and drove the enemy pell-mell back to the woods.

From noon until midnight the battle raged. The enemy seemed to be everywhere — in front, on the flank, and behind. Some of the Union troops fought in seven different positions, so often did the direction of the battle shift. As the Sixteenth Corps met the first shock of the conflict, so too it fired the last shots that night at Bald Hill. Engaged on four parts of the battle field, its losses, consisting almost entirely of killed and wounded, were heavier than the casualties of any other unit of its size. Yet it never wavered. Eight captured battle flags were the symbols of the masterly leadership of General Dodge and the valor of his men.



MAJOR GENERAL GRENVILLE M. DODGE

Despite his acknowledged ability, Dodge did not escape criticism. In order to secure reliable information about the enemy he hired loyal residents in the South as scouts. For fear of having their identity disclosed, they refused to sign receipts for the money they received. So insinuations of graft were made and there were no vouchers to prove the lie. Nevertheless Lincoln and Grant took his word, and one of his friends said, "Grin and bear it." But it was mostly "bearing" and not much "grinning".

Grant had only praise for the generalship of Dodge. He spoke of him to Stanton as "an exceedingly efficient officer". In planning the Vicksburg campaign, he stationed a reserve force at Corinth to protect communication lines, and selected Dodge for this duty — a man of judgment who could be depended upon to act decisively in an emergency and obey orders. The dispatch ended with the significant words, "I know you will stay there."

Just as Sheridan found his place as a cavalry leader, so Dodge found the particular work for which he was fitted. He had the technical knowledge and the practical experience of railroad construction which enabled him to build and maintain the transportation facilities that were so vital to an advancing army. But repairing railroads and constructing bridges which had been destroyed by the enemy was not as glorious as winning battles. "He is too valuable an officer to be anywhere except at the front," Grant wrote to Sherman, "and one

that you can rely upon in any and every emergency.'' Nevertheless, much of Dodge's most valuable service was behind the lines.

As Sherman was closing in upon Atlanta, he was halted by the bridgeless Chattahoochie River. Dodge thought that his men could cut the timber from the forest and build a bridge in a week. But when he arrived on Monday he saw the possibility of speeding the work by using the lumber of some idle factory buildings. Sherman's troops marched across the bridge on Wednesday.

Rebuilt bridges could be destroyed again if not sufficiently garrisoned. Earth defenses had been used with limited success, but something more effective was needed. Dodge conceived the idea of erecting two-story, log blockhouses at the bridge heads. A company occupying one of these could repulse a regiment. Indeed, they were so successful that Grant had them erected at strategic points on all the railroads.

Because of Dodge's ingenuity and engineering ability, the officers of the Union Pacific Railroad urged him again and again to leave the army to become their chief engineer. But he considered building railroads down in Tennessee out of twisted rails and native timber more vital to his country. Not until 1866 did he accept the position.

This building of a railroad across a continent through hostile country where every man had to have a gun constantly by his side was an undertak-

ing the like of which had never been attempted. Each day taught lessons, and year by year the mileage increased. The chief engineer was quick to profit by experience and change his methods if the old way did not work. The plains were crossed, and the mountains too. By applying the slogan, "Speed up but build well", the road was completed in 1869, several years before the expiration of the contract.

Whether as a railroad engineer, a soldier, or a frontiersman, Grenville M. Dodge established a world-wide reputation for resourcefulness and accomplishment. He had the faculty of doing as well as planning. During the war his conduct in battle was no less brilliant than his counsel at headquarters. Obstacles were challenges to be accepted, not barriers to justify defeat. In his campaign against the Indians, at the end of the war, he ordered the troops never to retreat. As Sherman said to McPherson in a crisis, "I think you had better send Dodge."

Ruth E. Dugan

George Windle Read

"A modern war would be finished and decided before a volunteer army could be drilled to any degree of efficiency", declared Lieutenant George W. Read in an address to the Baconian Club at the State University of Iowa in 1890. "Some years ago the old war veterans scattered throughout the country constituted a powerful army which could be quickly called into service but most of them are now too old for service and many have passed to the land where the bugle calls no more to battle."

Thus did the new commandant of the cadet battalion at the University state the traditional military attitude on preparedness and explain the present need for training soldiers. That he should favor a better army and a larger navy was thoroughly characteristic of the man. He would probably have held the same opinions if he had never gone to West Point. Tall, erect, keen eyed, and precise, his whole bearing proclaimed him to be a natural-born soldier. He believed in law, order, regularity, and discipline — cardinal virtues to the maintenance of which he devoted a long military career.

George Windle Read, the fifth Iowan to attain the rank of major general and the first to achieve that military eminence in time of peace, was born in Indianola on November 19, 1860. He received his ear-

ly education in Des Moines, graduating from the East Des Moines High School in 1877. The next year he took the competitive examination for admission to West Point, secured an appointment, and entered the military academy in 1879. During the last year he was first captain of the Corps of Cadets. Upon his graduation from West Point, he was assigned to the Sixteenth Infantry on June 13, 1883, but in September he was transferred to the Fifth Cavalry, with which branch of the service he was attached continuously until 1918, advancing through the various grades to the rank of brigadier general.

For six years after graduation he was stationed at cavalry posts in Wyoming and Indian Territory, busy with the routine garrison duties of a second lieutenant on the frontier. And then in 1889 he was detailed for special duty as Professor of Military Science and Tactics at the State University of Iowa, assuming command of the cadet battalion at the beginning of the school year in September.

Lieutenant Read entered into his new work with his customary precision and clarity of purpose. He instituted a practice of instructing the new men in special squads, from which they were promoted to the various companies as they became proficient; he organized a company of sixteen men for exhibition drills of the silent manual; he added guard mount to the list of ceremonies at the May commencement; and he inaugurated the practice of awarding shoulder straps to the winners in individual events

at the annual prize drills. During his second year at the University, Lieutenant Read wrote a prize-winning essay on the systematic training of field troops, for which he received a gold medal and a certificate of life membership in the Military Service Institute. Probably his promotion to the rank of first lieutenant was due not only to his success as commandant at the University but to his initiative and study of military problems. It might have been expected under his leadership that the University of Iowa would be the first school to use the revised infantry drill regulations in 1891.

For four years this neatly clad and rather austere lieutenant retained the post of commandant at the University — a year longer than customary, by special request of the Board of Regents. "His remarkable military bearing, no less than his soldierly conduct inspired in the battalion new life and new activity." Inclined to be stern and exacting, he was nevertheless not a martinet. Although he was reticent with his praise, he gave it ungrudgingly when commendation was deserved.

In 1893 Lieutenant Read returned to active service with the Fifth Cavalry, being stationed at various posts in the far West during the intervening years before the war with Spain. From 1894 until 1897, he was regimental quartermaster and during the spring of 1897 acted as adjutant for the regiment. During the war he was engaged in staff duty and as corps ordinance officer. After the fighting

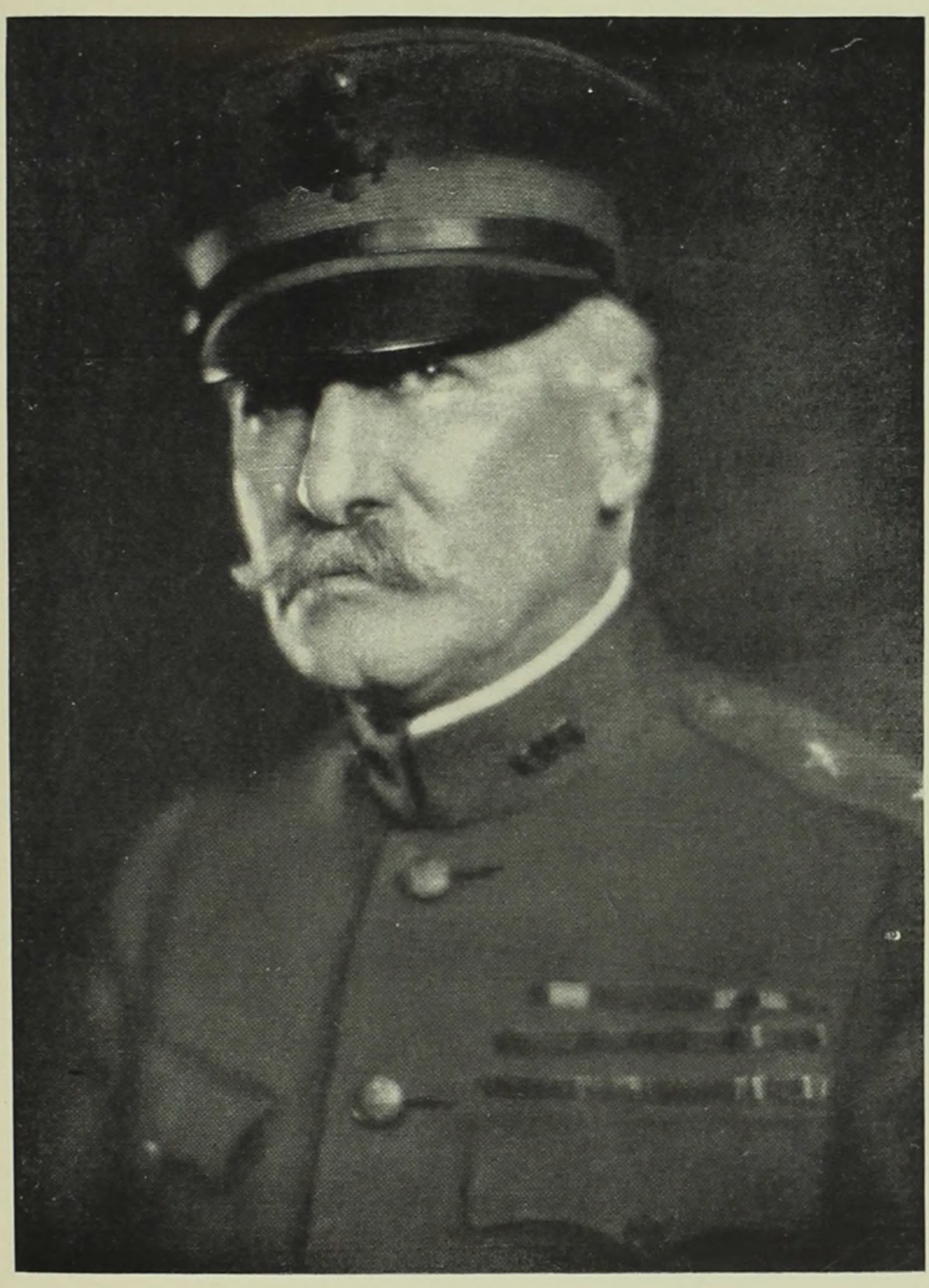
was over he remained with the Evacuation Commission in Cuba until the spring of 1899, when he was promoted to the rank of captain and made post commander at Fort Bayard, New Mexico. It was not until the intervention of 1906 that duty again sent him to Cuba. At that time, while a General Staff Officer, he was a member of the Claims Commission with the Provisional Government in Cuba. And for a while in 1908 he was Governor of the Province of Pinar del Rio.

Between the Cuban episodes, Captain Read had an unusual variety of military experience. During the latter half of 1899 he commanded a troop in New Mexico and Arizona; from January, 1900, until June, 1901, he was regimental adjutant; during the last six months of 1901 he was acting judge advocate for the Department of Southern Luzon in the Philippines; while from December, 1901, to September, 1902, with the exception of four month's service as Adjutant General of the Fourth Brigade, he saw action in the line. Back in the United States, he was stationed at the Presidio of Monterey in California at various times, served as president of a board to purchase cavalry horses in the summer of 1903, was a member of the board to make military reconnaissance of the Hawaiian Islands, went abroad on a confidential mission in 1904, and proposed a "battle sight" for the service rifle which was adopted in 1905.

After four years on the General Staff, Captain

Read was promoted to the rank of major in 1910 and assigned to the Philippines where he was inspector general of the Department of Mindanao. But in 1912 when trouble on the Mexican border developed he returned for service with the cavalry in Arizona and in 1914 was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel. That same year he also graduated from the War College and was made adjutant general again, serving in that capacity with the Second Division in Texas and later in the War Department. Meanwhile, in 1916, he became a colonel.

When the United States declared war in April, 1917, Colonel Read was placed in charge of recruiting and disciplinary barracks. He immediately expanded the recruiting service and prepared regulations for war prison camps. But he craved more active work and a chance to join the Expeditionary Forces, so in August he was made a brigadier general in the national army and appointed brigade commander at Camp Upton. Three months later he was promoted to the rank of major general and, while temporarily in command of the Seventy-seventh Division, was assigned the duty of organizing and commanding the Fifteenth Cavalry Division at El Paso. There he remained until April, 1918, when he was placed in command of the Thirtieth (Old Hickory) Division of national guard troops from the Carolinas and Tennessee, was ordered to France immediately, and went into the training area on the British front.



MAJOR GENERAL GEORGE W. READ

After a brief period of observation of front line methods and conditions, General Read was placed at the head of the Second American Army Corps, consisting, after July, of five divisions. His task was to administer the units in the British zone and superintend their instruction. During July and August, 1918, these Americans were given some front line experience, and then three of the divisions were withdrawn, leaving only the Twenty-seventh and Thirtieth under the immediate command of General Read. In September, they were incorporated in the Fourth British Army, under General Henry Rawlinson, to participate in the grand offensive that was to end the war.

It was on September 29th that the attack was launched in the St. Quentin sector, with the Second Corps going over the top. A heavy fog which favored the surprise, made the mopping up very difficult. Moreover, the ground in front of the Twenty-seventh Division, bristling with defenses, was crossed in every direction by deep trenches, sunken roads, and subterranean passages. While the Americans were struggling forward to reach their objectives, the Germans lay concealed until the wave broke and then leaped out to engage, under cover of the mist, in a confused hand-to-hand combat. Nevertheless the impregnable Hindenburg Line was smashed that day at one of its strongest points. To the Americans went the credit for the initiative in the battle and the capture of the formidable tunnel

system. Their "splendid gallantry and devotion" won the highest admiration of their veteran Australian comrades.

After a short rest the Second Corps again went into the front line on October 6th. Continuing the steady offensive, these valiant troops pushed up to the Selle River where they encountered powerful resistance. But the Thirtieth Division, at the apex of the salient, was not to be halted. By the twentieth of October the ground dominating the Sambre Canal was attained and the Corps was again withdrawn for rest. While the losses had been appalling, the victory was glorious indeed. In three weeks they had advanced sixteen miles, captured a dozen villages, and taken six thousand prisoners.

"Called upon to attack positions of great strength held by a determined enemy," wrote Marshal Haig, the Second Corps "displayed an energy, courage, and determination in attack which proved irresistible." The "precision with which all staff arrangements" were performed appealed particularly to General Rawlinson, and in November, when the Second Corps was relieved from duty with the British army, he was pleased to say that the "efficient direction of the Corps Headquarters and the Divisions coupled with the surpassing gallantry" of the men "contributed very materially in winning the decisive victory".

The battle on the Hindenburg Line at St. Quentin was the climax in the military career of General

Read. For his leadership in the World War he received the United States Distinguished Service Medal; he was made Knight Commander in the Order of the Bath by Great Britain; and by France he was designated Commander in the Legion of Honor and decorated with the Croix de Guerre with a palm.

After the armistice the Second Corps was sent to Le Mans to await embarkation. From February to April, 1919, General Read was in command of that embarkation center, but was then assigned to the command of the Rainbow Division and returned to America. Upon arrival in the United States, he was made commandant of Camp Jackson, South Carolina; in 1920 he was promoted to the rank of major general in the regular army and given the duty of organizing and commanding the Fifth Corps Area; and his last service was in command of the Philippine Department from 1922 until 1924 when he retired on November 19th, being that day sixty-four years old.

JOHN ELY BRIGGS

Hanson Edward Ely

"Battalion, attention!"

The cadets at the State University of Iowa stood rigid, heels together and eyes front. Many of them noticed, that afternoon in April, 1897, that Commandant Vogdes was accompanied by a tall athletic soldier wearing the uniform of a lieutenant in the regular infantry. Apparently the visitor was not a stranger, for several people greeted him as a former acquaintance. The officer was Hanson E. Ely, once a resident of Iowa City and recently detailed as military instructor at the University upon the request of the Board of Regents.

Ed Ely, as he was familiarly known among his boyhood friends, was born at Independence, Iowa, on November 3, 1867. While still a student in Iowa City High School he had joined the local national guard company. Perhaps that experience confirmed his desire for a military career, for in March, 1886, he took the competitive examination for admission to West Point and was appointed in 1887.

At the Military Academy he had the honor of being color corporal the second year and color sergeant the third year. Always aggressive, he excelled in the belligerent sports of boxing and football, though the lessons in discipline and tactics were not neglected. Having graduated into the army as a

second lieutenant in 1891, he was assigned to the Twenty-second Infantry and reported for duty at Fort Keogh in Montana. An expedition to quell a labor riot in Idaho, a little Indian fighting, guard duty at the World's Fair in Chicago, an exploratory trip in the upper Roseau River region, rifle competition, and garrison duty filled the years be tween 1891 and 1897.

Lieutenant Ely enthusiastically accepted the assignment as commandant at the University and organized the work with his customary dispatch. By the end of October the battalion was ready for dress parade. A "thorough soldier, both in appearance and manner", he so completely won the respect and aroused the patriotism of the students that the whole battalion volunteered for active service in the war with Spain and elected him unanimously for their major. When Governor Shaw refused to accept the University battalion, Lieutenant Ely assisted in the organization of a volunteer battery which was also rejected. Early in May he was appointed mustering officer for South Dakota troops.

The Spanish-American War ended before the Twenty-second Infantry was needed at the front, but in January, 1899, the regiment, having been assembled at Fort Crook, was ordered to the Philippines. During the first year in the Far East, Lieutenant Ely was attached to the service of supply, being regimental and brigade quartermaster and acting commissary of subsistence for the Third Brigade

of the First Division. Again, for nearly a year after July, 1900, he was depot commissary for the Department of Northern Luzon. It was valuable experience, the full importance of which was to be realized many years later on the battle fields of France. Nor was his Philippine service entirely behind the lines. For gallantry in action at Tuliahan River on March 25, 1899, he was authorized to wear a silver star on the ribbon of his Philippine Campaign medal. During the spring of 1900 he had the honor of commanding General Funston's famous Mounted Scouts.

Having been made a captain in the Twenty-sixth Infantry on February 2, 1901, he returned to the United States and from October, 1901, to November, 1903, was regimental recruiting officer stationed at Des Moines. During the following year he commanded the First Battalion of his regiment in Texas, the next two years he attended the Infantry and Cavalry School and the Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, and in the fall of 1906 he was sent abroad to observe the German military maneuvers and study European armies. From 1907 to 1912 duty kept him in the Philippines. On March 11, 1913, he was promoted to the rank of major and two years later participated in the Vera Cruz expedition as a battalion and regimental commander.

Twenty-six years were required for Hanson E. Ely to win a commission as lieutenant colonel — twenty-six years of regular army routine, relieved

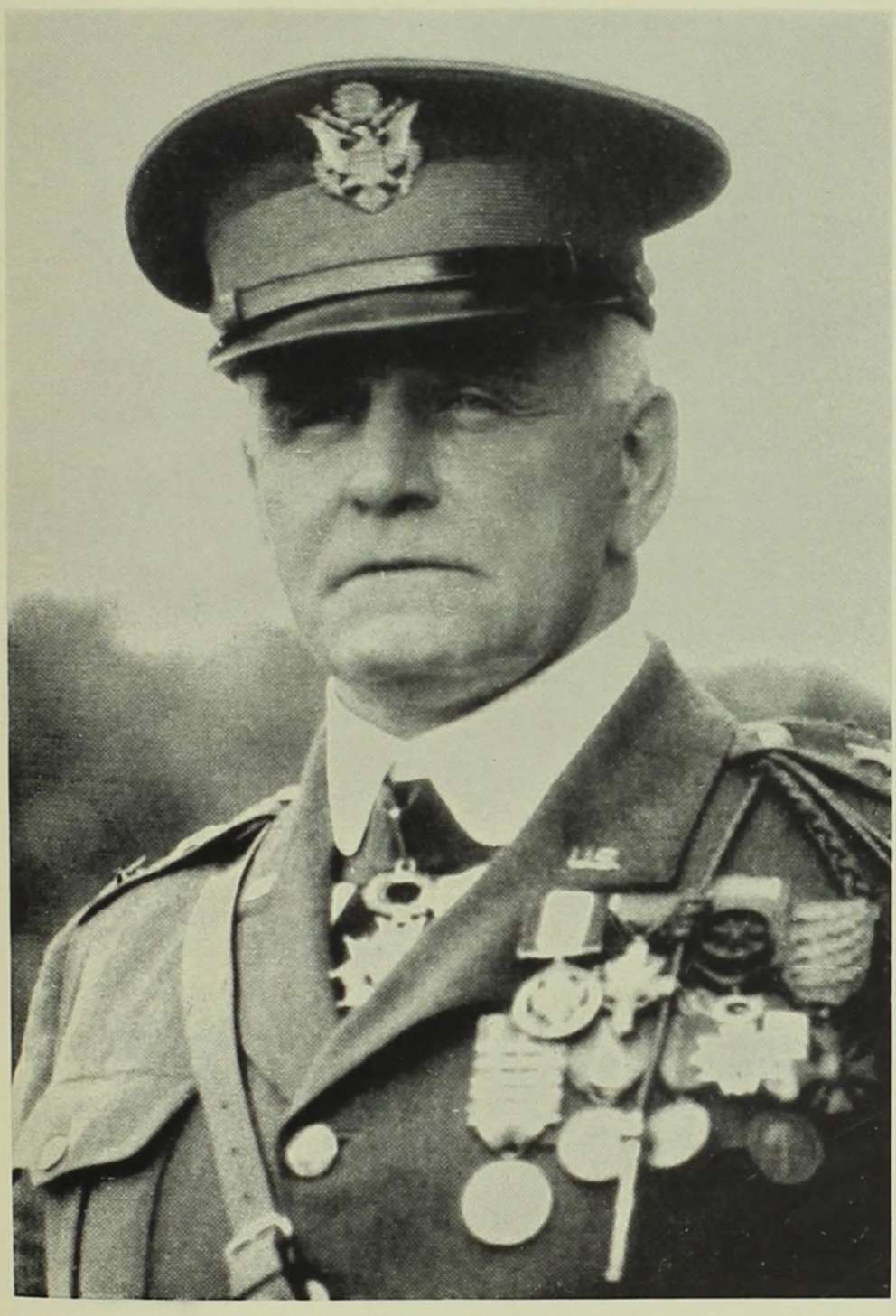
occasionally by marksmanship competition and summer maneuvers, by punitive expeditions and overseas service. He missed the fighting in the war with Spain and his part in suppressing the Philippine insurrection was confined almost entirely to staff duty. More than a quarter of a century of garrison life must have been irksome to a man of his energetic disposition.

Just after daybreak on the twenty-eighth of May, 1918, a heavy barrage rolled up the slopes toward the village of Cantigny on the Western Front. Behind the curtain of fire advanced three thin lines of storming troops in steady waves, bearing on their uniforms the insignia of the Twenty-eighth Infantry and the First American Division. With the precision of a practice maneuver, every unit went forward against the most strategic point won by the Germans in their swift advance into the valley of the Avre. Led by their company commanders, the men of the Twenty-eighth entered the town just as the bombardment ceased, exactly on time. The resistance of the enemy was stubborn, for the loss of Cantigny would endanger his whole line in the adjacent valley, but the Americans had no idea of being repulsed. On through the town they went, mopping up, and reached their objectives beyond at twenty minutes after seven. At seven thirty they outlined their position with flares and began digging in. Infuriated at being hurled from an important position by inexperienced troops, the enemy retaliated by concentra-

ting the full strength of his artillery against the town in a terrific bombardment that lasted three days. Every building in the place was leveled, and still the Americans clung to their shell holes, crushing five powerful counter-attacks with their deadly rifle and machine-gun fire.

To the Twenty-eighth Infantry — physically fit, well trained, and confident — had been given the honor of making the first American offensive in France. Much of the credit for the swift and decisive victory was due to the ability, aggressiveness, and dynamic character of Colonel Hanson E. Ely, who personally directed the attack, made quick decisions, and demonstrated his capacity for great physical endurance. In order to keep in touch with his troops he remained in an exposed position during the attack, "although shelled by enemy artillery, and made frequent trips of observation after the capture of Cantigny to better acquaint himself with the exact situation." For his daring and ability he was cited by Marshal Petain as a "brilliant soldier" who "infused in his Regiment the dash with which he is animated."

One of the first American officers to reach France, being a member of the mission sent in June, 1917, to study organization and tactics, he was transferred to the staff of the Commander-in-Chief of the American Expeditionary Forces on the request of General Pershing and appointed Provost Marshal General. In August, 1917, be became chief of staff of the



MAJOR GENERAL HANSON E. ELY

First Division, but in May, 1918, at his own request, he was assigned to the command of the Twenty-eighth Infantry. The Croix de Guerre, the honor of Officer of the Legion of Honor, and a commission as brigadier general in the national army were the rewards for his heroic rôle at Cantigny.

Having been assigned to the Third Brigade of the Second Division, General Ely took command just in time to participate in the mighty Soissons counter-offensive. In the new strategy, which substituted surprise for artillery preparation, the tired Second Division hurried into line during the pitch-dark, rainy night of July 17th, actually feeling its way into position. An hour before zero the attacking battalions had not arrived. But when the rolling barrage started with a crash at four thirty-five, the men of the Second Division were "there", though some of them had to catch their breath as they went over the top in the deliberate pace of the advance. Nevertheless, "in spite of three nights without sleep, long marches through rain and mud, shortage of food and water", Ely's brigade "advanced nine kilometers, captured over 2500 prisoners," and seized large quantities of supplies before being relieved.

By the end of the first day, according to the plan, headquarters of the Third Brigade were to be established at Vierzy. That evening when General Ely went forward the village had not been cleared of the enemy and he was fired upon at short range by machine guns. "At great personal risk", he or-

ganized and directed "an attack which resulted in the capture of the town and in the advance of the lines well beyond." According to the official citation for the Distinguished Service Cross, his "indomitable bravery, disregard for his own safety, devotion to his men and his presence with them in the front line, inspired them to deeds of great courage and enabled the troops to take the town despite strong enemy resistance made by vastly superior numbers."

Still with the Third Brigade, General Ely participated in the hard fighting at St. Mihiel in September and contributed "notably to the brilliant success at Blanc Mont Ridge" early in October. In the battle of St. Mihiel, his brigade, leading the attack, "broke through the enemy's fortified lines and advanced with such power and rapidity that it swept all opposition aside and was able to seize the bridges over the Rupt de Mad and occupy Thiaucourt, capturing over 3000 prisoners and 100 cannon." The second-day objectives were occupied before two o'clock on the first day, with less than four hundred casualties.

About two weeks later the brigade moved to the front again in the darkness of the night "over an unknown terrain, without guides, and in close proximity to the enemy," to storm the heights of Blanc Mont Ridge. Having carried the position, the brigade engaged in "one of the bitterest struggles of the war" to hold the ridge. Night and day for a week, constantly under intense artillery and ma-

chine-gun fire, Ely's men resisted the most persistent counter-attacks, "yielding not one inch of conquered ground." The losses were heavier than most troops could stand, but the men of the Third Brigade, in experience, morale, and resourcefulness, were first-rate soldiers like their fighting commander. In the three offensives under the leadership of General Ely, the brigade captured over seven thousand prisoners — three thousand more than any other brigade. In the words of General John A. Lejeune, this phenomenal success was "very largely due to the great qualities of leadership displayed by Brigadier General Ely."

Meanwhile, the battle of the Meuse-Argonne had entered its second phase — a month of continual bombardment, attack, and consolidation, as the American armies pushed forward from one objective to the next — steadily, inexorably. The Hindenburg Line had been broken in the first fierce rush in September, and on October 14th a general attack was launched on the Kriemhilde Stellung, the last strong line of the German defense.

In position before the Pultiere and Rappes woods was the Fifth Division, new to that sector and discouraged by three days of apparently aimless maneuvering and conflicting orders. But the men who wore the ace of diamonds on their shoulders were determined to prove their courage and ability. Though weary from loss of sleep and endless counter-marching, they went into battle with all the ardor of their

first charge, passed through the enemy barrage, moved steadily up the bare slopes of the hills, and advanced through the woods, exposed to withering machine-gun fire from three sides and the merciless hammering of the heavier guns from the galleries on the heights beyond. By night a handful of survivors reached the farther edge of Rappes woods and dug in. This was their destination. They had gone where they were told to go.

After three days of desperate fighting, nearly three-fourths of the rifle strength of the division had been spent. But the Aces were still holding the Pultiere woods on the morning of October 17th, when a big, blue-eyed man with a firm jaw and an air of confident determination, took command of the shattered division. It was Hanson E. Ely, recently commissioned major general. Four more days the Aces remained at the front, fighting stubbornly while their new commander coördinated the various units. Withdrawn for rest on October 22nd, the division absorbed three thousand replacements and, catching the spirit of their indomitable leader, went back into the line for a glorious share in the final drive which began on November 1st and ended with the armistice eleven days later.

With its right flank on the bank of the Meuse at Brieulles, the Fifth pivoted to the right until the whole division faced the river above Dun-sur-Meuse. For two days the Aces were held on that shell-cursed western slope, while patrols searched in vain for a

crossing. By two o'clock on the morning of November 4th, the engineers, working between vicious bursts of machine-gun fire, had completed two foot bridges, but when the infantry tried to cross they were blown to pieces by the enemy. At nine thirty came an order from corps headquarters, "The crossing will be effected regardless of loss, as the movement of the entire Army depends upon this crossing, and it must be done at once."

At four o'clock in the afternoon an attempt to cross on pontoons at Clery-le-Petit was frustrated, but another party gained a foothold opposite Brieulles and a battalion swam the icy river and canal just below. That night another battalion crossed and artillery bridges were built at Brieulles. The next task was to take Dun-sur-Meuse.

"Take Dun-sur-Meuse and the hill north of 292, and from there go to the east. Do not wait for the other brigade", ordered General Ely. "Keep shoving your battalions through", he told another detachment. "Don't stop, but go through Dun. Take the shelling, and take the machine-gun fire, and push things along." And so Dun-sur-Meuse and the heights were taken that day. "This operation", declared General Pershing, "was one of the most brilliant military feats in the history of the American Army in France."

After the armistice the Fifth Division was included in the Army of Occupation and stationed in Luxembourg where the deportment of officers and

men in maintaining order received high praise. Having returned to the United States with his division in the summer of 1919, General Ely reverted to his former rank of colonel, but on March 5, 1921, was commissioned brigadier general and five months later was placed in command of the Post and General Service Schools at Fort Leavenworth. On February 2, 1923, he was made a major general in the regular army. During the four years from 1923 to 1927, he was Commandant of the Army War College. Since then he has served as Commanding General of the Second Corps Area with headquarters at Governors Island in New York.

JOHN ELY BRIGGS

Comment by the Editor

PROGRESS OF WAR

If war ever was an art it has ceased to be. War is scientific. The tactics of armies depend upon the inexorable laws of mathematics, physics, and chemistry. Not the niceties of human discretion, or the amenities of chivalry, but the strength of numbers, the range of guns, and the effect of gas are the factors that determine victory or defeat. The outcome of a battle may be calculated in advance. While strategy still has a place in the general scheme of military operations, it is a strategy of formula rather than genius. The conduct of war is not a business for amateurs.

The methods of warfare have changed tremendously since 1865. It would be surprising indeed, if the continual study and experimentation of professional soldiers had not produced new ways of winning battles. Some of the changes in tactics may have been induced by climate, topography, and the temperament of the belligerents; but most of the modern devices for defeating the enemy are adaptations of instruments of civilization to uses of destruction. The domestic tractor is converted into a monstrous tank and the swift mail plane becomes a scorpion of the air.

Although the technique of campaigning has been modified as shifting circumstances dictate, the qualifications of soldiers have remained the same as ever — albeit their functions have been specialized. Courage, audacity, and endurance are as essential now as in the reign of Caesar. Perhaps the element of discipline is more important than it was, but slavish regularity at the price of personal initiative may have cost Germany the war. Capacity for leadership is as vital in the composition of a first-class private as a general, and the traits of character that make a man a major general might also win a seat in Congress or a contract with the New York Giants.

J. E. B.

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